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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: Kuwait March 15, 2006

#### Major Issues

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- Kuwait Press and Publication law
- "We and the Other" Conference on Moderation in Islam
- Islam and Terrorism

#### Block Quotes

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-- Under the headline "Press Law and Then What?" on March 12, 2006, Salah Al Fadhli wrote in moderate independent daily newspaper Al Rai Al Aam: "The Press and Publication Law that recently ratified in Kuwait opened Kuwait's media market, and removed previous restrictions that limited the right to publish to the elite. The aspiration now is for this momentum to continue and to include other media channels. Future changes in the law must include television and radio outlets. There is no room in our world today for a media that has one tone.... The Minister of Information Dr. Anas Al Rasheed has succeeded in implementing changes to the press and publication law. Now, he has to turn his attention to in-house restructuring initiatives; these issues have been on the back burner for a long time, waiting for the press and publication law to pass first. The momentum that Dr. Rasheed has gained will help him to achieve additional successes."

-- On March 12, 2006, the editorial section in Al Anbaa newspaper, an independent moderate daily in Kuwait, included a column by Sultan Ibrahim Al Khalaf under the headline 'We and the other' in which he wrote: "The 'We and the Other' Conference that was held in cooperation with the Islamic Organization for Education, Science, and Culture (ISISCO), was organized to reinforce the concept that Islam is a tolerant religion, and its doctrine promotes moderation and respect of diversity among others. ...[T]he organizers based their efforts on the premise that Islam and Muslims believe in peaceful coexistence with others. With this in mind, how can the 'other' understand this concept of coexistence when hateful sentiments against Islam and Muslims are deep-rooted in their culture? The 'other' believes in the clash of civilizations, and considers Islam an enemy. The 'other' claims that they respect a Muslim's privacy and cultural values. However, at the same time, their political leaders impose their policies on us and attempt to change our educational systems, curricula, and exercise control over our charity systems. Their media channels intentionally desecrate our religious values and beliefs. Even our Prophet was not safe from their evil deeds.... From all the above, we can conclude that Muslims cannot trust the credibility of the West in its claims to respect Islam and understand its culture. This mutual understanding is nothing but a one-sided effort by Muslims, and not the other way

around."

-- 'Islam and Terrorism' was the headline of a column by M. Enezy in the editorial section of Al Anbaa newspaper, an independent moderate daily, on Sunday, March 12, 2006. Enezy wrote, "When Al Qaeda's organization announced its responsibility for the September 11, 2001 attacks, the military option was the best and only choice the U.S. Administration had to fight that threat and fight back. Because of the U.S. war on terrorism the Taliban and Saddam regimes were both toppled. Unfortunately, Islam was a common denominator between these two regimes. Now, some people believe that the American campaign was a bellicose crusade against Islam. This is not the case, because Saddam's regime had nothing to do with Islam. Iraq's neighbours -- Kuwait, Iran, and Saudi Arabia -- can bear witness to that. The ideology of the Ba'ath Party had no association with Islam. President Bush declared a war against terrorism, and not against Islam. If Islam were the enemy, then we would have seen U.S. troops invade Kuwait first and then proceed to Iraq. That is not what happened."

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